

address a financial crisis threatening the United States and Congress does not pass a joint resolution disapproving the loan or credit.

Mr. Speaker, these provisions all passed Congress as "riders" on appropriations bills in the 1990s. However, they have not been included in the appropriations bills for the past several years. It is long past time for Congress to make these provisions permanent. Over the past several years there has been great controversy over the use of the Exchange Stabilization Fund. This fund was created in the 1930s to help stabilize the exchange value of the dollar, yet it has mutated into a "slush fund" used by the executive branch to funnel money to foreign governments and even foreign companies free of congressional oversight.

In particular, there was great controversy over the Clinton administration's use of the ESF to finance the Mexican bailout without Congressional approval in 1995. Today, there is a similar controversy over the use of the ESF in the Iraq rebuilding process. Ensuring the fund is only used for narrow purposes will help end the controversy by bringing greater transparency to the disbursement of foreign aid. Even supporters of a vigorous foreign aid program should support restoring Congress' rightful role as appropriator and overseer of foreign aid funds.

Mr. Speaker, it long past time for Congress to begin reasserting its constitutional role in the appropriation of funds for foreign aid programs. For too long, the Exchange Stabilization Fund has allowed the executive branch to commit the American taxpayer to supporting foreign governments without even consulting with Congress. I hope all my colleagues will join my efforts to end this practice by cosponsoring my Foreign Aid Limitation Act.

SMALL BUSINESS TELEWORK ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by my colleagues, Representatives FROST, ABERCROMBIE, ISSA, RUSH, ROSS, WYNN, BLUMENAUER, MILLENDER-MCDONALD, FILNER, UDALL (NM), and JO ANN DAVIS (VA), in introducing the Small Business Telework Act to assist our nation's small businesses in establishing successful telework programs for their employees.

Across America, numerous employers are responding to the needs of their employees and establishing telework programs. In 2000, there were an estimated 16.5 million teleworkers. By the end of 2004, there will be an estimated 30 million teleworkers, representing an increase of almost 100 percent. Unfortunately, the majority of growth in new teleworkers comes from organizations employing over 1,500 people, while just a few years ago, most teleworkers worked for small to medium-sized organizations.

By not taking advantage of modern technology and establishing successful telework programs, small businesses are losing out on a host of benefits that will save them money, and make them more competitive. The reported productivity improvement of home-based teleworkers averages 15 percent trans-

lating to an average bottom-line impact of \$9,712 per teleworker. Additionally, most experienced teleworkers are determined to continue teleworking, meaning a successful telework program can be an important tool in the recruitment and retention of qualified and skilled employees. By establishing successful telework programs, small business owners would be able to retain these valuable employees by allowing them to work from a remote location, such as their home or a telework center.

In addition to the cost savings realized by businesses that employ teleworkers, there are a number of related benefits to society and the employee. For example, telecommuters help reduce traffic and cut down on air pollution by staying off the roads during rush hour. Fully 80 percent of home-only teleworkers commute to work on days they are not teleworking. Their one-way commute distance averages 19.7 miles, versus 13.3 miles for non-teleworkers, meaning employees that take advantage of telework programs are, more often than not, those with the longest commutes. Teleworking also gives employees more time to spend with their families and reduces stress levels by eliminating the pressure of a long commute.

Mr. Speaker, our legislation seeks to extend the benefits of successful telework programs to more of our nation's small businesses. Specifically, it establishes a pilot program in the Small Business Administration (SBA) to raise awareness about telework among small business employers and to encourage those small businesses to establish telework programs for their employees.

Additionally, an important provision in our bill directs the SBA Administrator to undertake special efforts for businesses owned by, or employing, persons with disabilities and disabled America veterans. At the end of the day, telework can provide more than just environmental benefits and improved quality of life. It can open the door to people who have been precluded from working in a traditional office setting due to physical disabilities.

Our legislation is also limited in cost and scope. It establishes the pilot program in a maximum of five SBA regions and caps the total cost to five million dollars over two years. It also restricts the SBA to activities specifically proscribed in the legislation: developing educational materials; conducting outreach to small business; and acquiring equipment for demonstration purposes. Finally, it requires the SBA to prepare and submit a report to Congress evaluating the pilot program.

Several hurdles to establishing successful telework programs could be cleared by enacting our legislation. In fact, the number one reported obstacle to implementing a telework program is a lack of know-how. Our bill will go a long way towards educating small business owners on how they can draft guidelines to make a telework program an affordable, manageable reality.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support today for this modest bipartisan amendment offered by Reps. SLAUGHTER, SHAYS, DICKS, and LEACH to increase funds for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

As a Member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, and a longtime supporter of the arts at the state level in California, I value the tremendous role arts funding and arts education programs play in the lives of our children and friends.

Several academic studies demonstrate the connection between music, dance, visual arts, and the development of the human brain. It is well known among researchers that arts education cultivates critical thinking skills that are so important in our information-age economy.

My congressional district was fortunate to receive NEA and NEH grants this year. Some of the recipients include:

Performing arts educational outreach programs at schools in my district combined with the assistance with one of the region's most respected theaters; A program to support the Chinese Community Initiative in arts education; Artist-in-residence programs in elementary schools to encourage student and teacher involvement; A program in my district that incorporates traditional music and dance from diverse cultures to improve student relations, coordination and memory; and an amateur chamber orchestra, and a symphony association program to bolster musical knowledge and skills for ethnically diverse student population.

As a parent of two young children, I am particularly interested in the most recent research. Children who learn to read music or play an instrument show improved proficiency in math and science. To further proficiency in history, I was proud to join a letter of support to House Appropriators last month that would increase funding to the NEH budget for its We the People Initiative, which is designed to boost American knowledge and appreciation for our history, culture and civic traditions.

This increase of \$15 million under the Interior Appropriations for the NEA and NEH will go to fund so many rich programs offered and so many opportunities for us all.

Last year, an economic study conducted by Americans for the Arts found that America's nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion in annual economic activity. This number includes full time jobs, household income and local, state and federal tax revenue. This study includes more than \$80 billion in event-related spending by audiences. This is additional clear evidence that opportunities funded through NEA and NEH continue to bring us to new levels in our economy, culture, language, music, art and life.